



Name

Gearl Loden, Ph.D.

Current School District and Location

Nixa Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Gearl Loden currently serves as the Superintendent of Nixa Public Schools in Nixa, Missouri, where he has led transformative initiatives in academic achievement, leadership development, and community partnerships. During his tenure in the district, Nixa advanced from the top 10% to the top 2% of school districts in the state of Missouri.

At one point, over 5% of all sitting superintendents in Mississippi were either hired or directly trained by Dr. Loden, highlighting the leadership pipeline he helped develop. Before his position in Nixa, he served as a superintendent in Mississippi, where he was recognized as the State Superintendent of the Year.

He is a leadership coach, speaker, and the founder of Loden Leadership and Consulting Group LLC. In this role, he coaches superintendents and aspiring leaders across the nation. He has successfully led three bond campaign passages and one tax levy increase in two different school districts across two states.

Dr. Loden serves as adjunct faculty at Buffalo State University, where he teaches aspiring international educational leaders. His work continues to impact the field through training, mentorship, and thought leadership in both education and executive coaching.

Education

Gearl holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Delta State University, a Master's in Educational Leadership from the University of Mississippi, a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Mississippi, and a Master of Business Administration from Western Governors University.

Experience

Gearl's career path in education was sparked by a single teacher's encouragement and belief that he could overcome challenges such as dyslexia, ADHD, color blindness, and caring for an ailing parent. He began teaching and coaching in 1991 and was subsequently appointed as the principal of Oxford Middle School in 1998. In 1999, he transitioned to become the K-2 principal at Houston Public Schools. By 2003, while also serving as an adjunct professor at Mississippi State University, he held the position of Executive Director of Human Resources for Meridian Public Schools before assuming the role of principal at South Panola High School in 2005. Gearl stepped into his first superintendency at Amory Public Schools in 2009. In 2012, he became the superintendent at Tupelo Public Schools, where he served until moving to Missouri.

in 2018, when he became the current superintendent. He has also been an adjunct professor at Buffalo State University since 2022.

Outstanding Achievement(s)

Dr. Loden has been awarded the Mississippi Superintendent of the Year. Under Dr. Loden's leadership, Nixa has been recognized as an International Model PLC District, and several schools in the district have earned national recognition. Mathews Elementary and Nixa High School are both National Blue Ribbon Schools. Dr. Loden was named Nixa's Citizen of the Year and was also honored as one of Springfield's Metro Men of the Year.

AN INTERVIEW

Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.

It is an exciting and pivotal time to serve as a superintendent. Today's world is complex, fast-paced, and constantly evolving, and the pace of change will only accelerate in the years ahead. Superintendents have a unique opportunity to lead with vision while building strong relationships with faculty, staff, families, and community stakeholders. The role goes far beyond operations; it's about shaping a culture that fosters robust learning experiences, supports the whole child, and prepares students for an increasingly dynamic future. Strategic leadership, authentic connection, and adaptability are essential qualities for success in today's superintendency.

What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?

In my early years as a superintendent, I developed a deeper appreciation for the power of relationships, particularly with my leadership team, the school board, and community partners. I learned the importance of communicating proactively with board members and providing just-in-time information to support sound governance. My perspective also evolved into a more strategic, systems-level view, allowing me to see more clearly how decisions and initiatives connect across the district. Additionally, I came to understand the critical role of collaborating with local agencies and elected officials to advocate for students, staff, and public education. These insights strengthened both my leadership and my ability to serve effectively.

Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.

One of the most impactful experiences I've had is leading small-group sessions for superintendents and aspiring superintendents on topics like board relations, contract negotiations, and leadership transitions. These sessions have been both energizing and deeply rewarding. The open dialogue and collaborative spirit foster honest conversations and rich learning for all involved, including me. These experiences have reminded me that the best professional growth often comes through shared leadership and the wisdom of peers.

Submitted by:

Gearl Loden, Ph.D.



Name/Signature

June 4, 2025

Date